

The background of the image is a photograph of a dense forest. Sunlight filters through the canopy of tall trees, creating bright rays of light and casting long shadows. The ground is covered in green grass and low-lying plants. The overall atmosphere is serene and spiritual.

# Reflections: Expecting the Best From Allah

“In accordance with how good your expectations of and hope in Allāh are and how truthful your reliance and trust are in Him, Allāh will not betray your hopes in the least, as He does not betray the hopes of those who hope and does not cause any effort to go to waste.”

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## - Some Statements of the *Salaf* -

The Messenger of Allāh (peace be upon him) narrated from his Lord that He Said: “*I am as my slave expects Me to be.*”<sup>1</sup>

Ibn Hajar (may Allāh have Mercy on him) said: “Meaning, I am able to do whatever he expects I will do.”<sup>2</sup>

an-Nawawī (may Allāh have Mercy on him) said: “The scholars say that expecting the best of Allāh is to expect that He will have Mercy on him and relieve him of hardship.”<sup>3</sup>

an-Nawawī also said: “al-Qādī ‘Iyād said that this means He will Forgive him if he seeks such, will accept his repentance if he repents, will answer him if he supplicates, and will suffice him if he asks for something. It is also said that it refers to having hope and longing for relief, and this is more correct.”<sup>4</sup>

Ahmad bin ‘Umar al-Qurtubī (may Allāh have Mercy on him) said:

“It is said that His Saying “*I am as my slave expects Me to be*” means if one expects an answer when he supplicates, his repentance to be accepted, something repugnant to be repelled from him, his deeds to be accepted that are performed with their proper conditions... And this is supported by his saying: “Call upon Allāh while you are certain that you will be answered.” Likewise, it is incumbent upon the one who repents, seeks Forgiveness, and does good deeds to exert himself in fulfilling his obligations while he is certain that Allāh will accept his actions and Forgive his sins, as Allāh has promised that He will accept any truthful repentance and righteous deeds. So, whoever performs such a deed and believes and expects that Allāh will not accept it and that it will not benefit him, this is despair from the Mercy of Allāh, and is from greatest of the major sins. Whoever dies upon this will be delivered to that which he expected.”<sup>5</sup>

Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allāh have Mercy on him) said:

“Most people – in fact, all of them except those protected by Allāh – assume other than the truth, and assume the worst. Most people believe that they are deprived of their rights, have

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<sup>1</sup> al-Bukhārī (7405) and Muslim (2675)

<sup>2</sup> ‘Fath al-Bārī’ (17/397)

<sup>3</sup> ‘Sharh Sahīh Muslim’ (14/210)

<sup>4</sup> ‘Sharh Sahīh Muslim’ (14/2)

<sup>5</sup> ‘al-Muḥīm li mā Ushkil min Talkhīs Kitāb Muslim’ (5/267)

bad luck, deserve more than what Allāh gave them, and it is as if they are saying: ‘My Lord has wronged me and deprived me of what I deserve,’ and his soul bears witness to this while his tongue denies it and refuses to openly state this. And whoever digs into his soul and comes to know its ins and outs will see this in it like fire in a triggered explosion...And if you dig into anyone’s soul, you will see that he blames fate and would rather have something else happen to him than what actually did, and that things should be this way or that...So, dig into your own self: are you protected from this? If you are safe from this, you have been protected from something great. Otherwise, I do not see that you have been saved.”<sup>6</sup>

He also said:

“The more you have good expectations of your Lord and hope in Him, the more you will rely on and trust in Him. This is why some explained true reliance and trust to be having good expectations of Allah. In reality, having good expectations of Him leads to relying on and trusting in Him, as it is unthinkable that one can trust in someone that he has bad expectations of or no hope in, and Allāh Knows best.”<sup>7</sup>

He also said: “The one who hopes in Allāh should always be optimistic, cautious, and hopeful in Allāh’s bounty, expecting the best from Him.”<sup>8</sup>

Sayyid Qutb (may Allāh have Mercy on him) said:

“As for the believers whose hearts are connected to Allāh, whose souls are close to Him, who experience His constant bounty – they do not despair of the Mercy of Allah even if they are surrounded on all sides by disaster and severe hardship. The believer is in the mercy of the shade of his faith, the pleasure of his connection to his Lord, and the tranquility of his confidence in his Guardian even when he is in the throes of hardship and disaster.”

He also said:

“The believing heart assumes the best of its Lord, and always expects the best from Him. It expects good from Him in times of ease and times of hardship, and it believes that Allāh wants good for him in either situation. The secret of this is that his heart is connected to Allāh, and the flow of good from Allāh is never cut off. So, whenever the heart is connected to Him, it touches upon this fundamental reality and experiences it in a direct and sweet way.”<sup>9</sup>

Some of the *Salaf* said:

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<sup>6</sup> ‘Zād al-Ma’ād’ (3/235)

<sup>7</sup> ‘Tahdhīb Madārij as-Sālikīn’ (p. 240)

<sup>8</sup> ‘Tahdhīb Madārij as-Sālikīn’ (p. 300)

<sup>9</sup> ‘Fī Dhilāl al-Qur’ān’ (6/3219)

“Whenever a crisis comes your way, utilize your good expectations of Allāh in order to repel it. This will bring you closer to relief.”<sup>10</sup>

Sa’īd bin Jubayr (may Allāh have Mercy on him) would supplicate: “O Allāh, I ask you to grant me true reliance on You and good expectations of You.”<sup>11</sup>

‘Abdullāh bin Mas’ūd (may Allāh be Pleased with him) said:

“By the One besides Who none is worthy of worship, the believer is not given anything good better than his good expectations of Allāh, and by the One besides Who none is worthy of worship, no servant of Allāh expects good of Him except that Allāh gives him what he expected, since all good is in His Hand.”<sup>12</sup>

Sufyān ath-Thawrī (may Allāh have Mercy on him) would say: “I do not want to be judged by my father, as my Lord is better to me than my father.”<sup>13</sup>

‘Ammār bin Yūsuf (may Allāh have Mercy on him) said: “I saw Hasan bin Sālih in a dream, and I said: “I was hoping to meet you! What can you inform us of?”” He replied: “I give you the glad tidings that I see nothing better than to have good expectations of Allāh.””<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> ‘al-Faraj Ba’d ash-Shiddah’ (1/154)

<sup>11</sup> ‘Siyar A’lām an-Nubalā’ (4/325)

<sup>12</sup> ‘Husn adh-Dhann bi Allāh’ (p. 96)

<sup>13</sup> ‘Husn adh-Dhann bi Allāh’ (p. 45)

<sup>14</sup> ‘Husn adh-Dhann bi Allāh’ (p. 45)

## - Reflections on Expecting the Best from Allāh -

A verse in the Book of Allāh caused me to stop and reflect for quite some time, and it deserves for me to stop at it:

{ “And it is He Who sends down the rain after they have despaired, and spreads abroad His Mercy. And He is the Guardian, the Praiseworthy.” }<sup>15</sup>

So, in my mind, I imagined how the people would panic over their families, livestock, and land due to the severe drought occurring in the midst of the oppressive, scorching heat. They had hope in Allāh and turned to supplication until they had no hope left, and were sure that they would perish.

Suddenly, the rain surprises them as it falls freely and vastly from the sky into the valleys of the Earth as a sign of the Mercy of Allāh, so that the land would come back to live along with these lives and souls after they had lost all hope!

And how beautiful is it that the verse is capped with the Names of Allāh, *al-Walī* (the Guardian) *al-Hamīd* (the Praiseworthy), as He is the sole Guardian of His slaves, who is sufficient for them and has Himself taken on their affairs at all times! Because of this, He alone is deserving of praise at all times...

Every guardian other than Him forgets, makes mistakes, falls short, or is heedless...

As for *al-Walī al-Hamīd*, my Lord does not forget or make mistakes. Glory be to Him, He does not become tired or sleep. He is the Living, the Self-sustaining. Therefore, everyone who takes Him as a guardian will find Him - without a doubt - the best Guardian and Assister. He spreads His Mercy to His allies all the time and everywhere, even in the most uncomfortable of places and the most pressing of times...

And my imagination continues with the caravan of the righteous of the past traversing through time...

So, I remember Ibrāhīm, the intimate friend of Allāh, as he is surrounded by his people from all sides, accusing him of smashing their gods and using this to frighten him. So, he answers them with the firmness of one who expects the best of his Lord and Guardian, with more firmness than a mountain:

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<sup>15</sup> *ash-Shūrā*; 28

{ “Do you dispute with me concerning Allāh while He has guided me, and I fear not those whom you associate with Allāh in worship? Nothing can happen to me except when my Lord Wills something. My Lord comprehends in His Knowledge all things.

Will you not then remember? And how should I fear those whom you associate in worship with Allāh while you fear not that you have joined in worship with Allāh things for which He has not sent down to you any authority. So, which of the two groups is more deserving of security? If you only knew.”}<sup>16</sup>

Which of the two groups is more deserving of security and assuming the best of his guardian - he whose guardian is the Controller of the Heavens and Earth, having in His Hand the entire Universe? Or he whose guardians dispute and are divided partners who cannot harm or benefit themselves or others? The answer comes loud and clear:

{ “It is those who believe and do not mix their belief with wrongdoing (polytheism).  
For them, there is security, and they are the guided.”}<sup>17</sup>

So, security and tranquility, which are from the results of expecting the best of Allāh, are all from the fruits of *Tawhīd*.

And I then imagine his people while they are carrying him in their arms and throwing him into the middle of the fire, and he does nothing with his firm heart and confidence in his Guardian except to say “Allāh is sufficient for me, and He is the best disposer of my affairs.”

I then think of his blessed wife, who he left with their child in a valley without vegetation without even turning to look back while she was calling him: "O Ibrāhīm! O Ibrāhīm! Who did you leave us with in this place?" She then realizes after her amazement at his continuing to walk away without turning back to look at her, and she says: "Did Allāh command you to do this?" He replied: "Yes." So, she replied, with the best expectation of her Guardian: "Therefore, He will not abandon us."

So, may Allāh bless such a husband and wife!

And I remember in this noble caravan Nūh in the depths of time as he stands alone facing his people, challenging them while he is alone and strange. However, the one who reflects on his words comes to know the strength of his confidence in his Guardian and his good expectation regarding His assistance:

{ “And recite to them the news of Nūh, when he said to his people: “O my people, if my stay and my reminding you of the signs of Allāh is hard on you, I put my trust in

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<sup>16</sup> al-An'ām; 80-81

<sup>17</sup> al-An'am; 82

*Allāh. So, devise your plot, you and your partners, and let not your plot be in doubt for you. Then, pass your sentence on me and give me no respite. ””}^{18}*

After him, Hūd faced the most powerful tyrants on Earth, whom Allāh had described as possessing power. He stood in their faces and said with confidence:

*{ “I call Allāh to witness and bear you witness that I am free from that which you ascribe as partners in worship with Him. So, plot against me, all of you, and give me no respite. I put my trust in Allāh, my Lord and your Lord! There is not a moving creature except that He has grasp of its forelock. Verily, my Lord is on the Straight Path.”}^{19}*

And I think of the noble group of youths who expected the best of their Guardian and opposed those they were close to and far from in order to please Him. So, they left the closest of people to them in order to flee to their Guardian and away from polytheism and sin, and in order to please Him, they exchanged their comfortable lives for a small cave. So, Allāh expanded it for them out of the Mercy that He poured forth on them:

*{ “...Seek refuge in the cave, and your Lord will open a way for you from His Mercy and will make for your affair easy for you.”}^{20}*

And I reflect on His Saying: {“...will open a way for you from His Mercy...”}, and I come to know that Allāh's Mercy is so vast that just some of it - an amount known to Allāh - was enough to make that cave, this prison, or this cell into a garden from the gardens of Paradise.

And I go back in my memory to the first verse, and I remember how Allāh had spread His Mercy to His slaves living in vast land by sending down rain after they had lost all hope, and how He descended His Mercy upon the youths in the harsh, tiny, dark cave, turning it into a vast space. So, I glorify and venerate my Guardian.

Indeed, this is how *al-Walī al-Hamīd* deals with His allies who have the utmost confidence and best expectations of Him, harbor no negative thoughts of Him, believe in His promises and guarantees, and calm their hearts from panicking such that they are tranquil and trusting in Him.

Therefore, Allāh Says, as is in the *Hadīth Qudsī* reported by al-Bukhārī and Muslim: “*I am as my slave expects Me to be, and I am with him when he remembers Me. If he*

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<sup>18</sup> *Yūnus*; 71

<sup>19</sup> *Hūd*; 54-56

<sup>20</sup> *al-Kahf*; 16

*remembers Me to himself, I make mention of him to Myself. And if he remembers Me in a group, I make mention of him in a group better than it. And if he comes near to Me by a handspan, I come near to him by an arm's length. And if he comes near to Me by an arm's length, I come near to him by the span of an outstretched arm. If he comes to Me walking, I come to him running.* <sup>”</sup><sup>21</sup> So, reflect on how Merciful and Just our Guardian is: “*I am as My slave expects Me to be.*”

So, whoever expects something bad from his Guardian or that He will abandon him, he will be stricken with anxiety and abandonment as a punishment from Allāh by His Justice. And whoever expects the best from his Guardian and knows that He is the best guardian and helper, and glorifies Him above being like any of the other various guardians who abandon their followers and ignore or misguide them - each of them is a terrible guardian and helper - whoever places his Guardian above these deficiencies and venerates Him and expects the best from Him and relies on Him as He should be relied on, He will in such a case be sufficient for that person:

{ “*And whosoever puts his trust in Allāh, He will suffice him.*”} <sup>”</sup><sup>22</sup>

In accordance with how good your expectations of and hope in Allāh are and how truthful your reliance and trust are in Him, Allāh will not betray your hopes in the least, as He does not betray the hopes of those who hope and does not cause any effort to go to waste.

This is why Khadījah said to the Messenger of Allāh (peace be upon him) when he returned from the cave of Hirā' frightened after his first meeting with the Angel: “By Allāh, Allāh will never abandon you. You fulfill the ties of kinship, carry the responsibilities of the poor, honor the guest, and you help those in need.” So, she swore that Allāh would never forsake him out of her good expectation of Allāh in His Justice with His righteous servants.

And Allāh confirmed this concept in His Book:

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{ “*Certainly, no one despairs of Allāh's Mercy except the people who disbelieve.*”} <sup>”</sup><sup>23</sup>

So, it is upon the believer to free himself from the way of the disbelievers and expect the best from Allāh in the affairs of this life and the next, even though the verse is apparently referring to the issues of this life, as Allāh Said in regards to the affairs of the Hereafter:

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<sup>21</sup> al-Bukhārī (7405) and Muslim (2675)

<sup>22</sup> *at-Talāq*; 3

<sup>23</sup> *Yūsuf*; 87

{ “Say: ‘O My slaves who have transgressed against themselves! Do not despair of the Mercy of Allāh. Indeed, Allāh Forgives all sins. Truly, He is Forgiving, Merciful.’”}<sup>24</sup>

So, this is, as the scholars say, the most hope-inspiring verse in the Book of Allāh due to the fact that it includes the greatest glad tiding, as He ascribed His servants to Himself out of honor for them and increase in their glad tidings. So, He is their Praiseworthy Guardian who will not forsake them if they expect the best of Him and stick to Him and place all their hopes at His door, and follow this up by not despairing of His Mercy. He then showed them in the clearest terms that He Forgives all sins of those who turn to Him.

So, what a great glad tiding to cool the eyes of the monotheists and relax the hearts of the believers who expect the best from their Lord and Guardian, who are truthful in their hope in Him, who have removed the cloak of despair and bad expectation of the One for Who no sin is too great and is not stingy with His Forgiveness and Mercy for His servants who turn to Him and rely on Him!

This is why Allāh Said immediately after this:

{ “And turn in repentance and in obedience with true faith to your Lord and submit to Him before the torment comes upon you, and you will not be helped, and follow the best of that which is sent down to you from your Lord...”}<sup>25</sup>

So, expecting the best of Allah on one's deathbed is to be certain in His promise to the believers and to have confidence in his Guardian that He will not forsake him or waste his efforts in the days past, as the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: “None of you should die except that he expects the best from Allāh.”<sup>26</sup> Expecting the best of Allāh during your life is just as the verses describe: turning to and relying on Him, and to flee unto His Pleasure with your good deeds, and to distance yourself from the path of those who have low expectations of their Lord and disobeyed Him as a result.

This is the difference between relying on your hopes in Allāh (the way of those who disobey Him) and expecting the best from Allāh (the way of the believers). Relying on hope occurs when one is lazy, follows his desires, and avoids the path of truthfulness, effort, repentance, turning to Allāh, and doing good deeds – all the while having hope in Allāh.

As for the praiseworthy form of expecting the best and the legislated manner of having hope, this is when one actually makes an effort while having good reliance on Allāh.

The first is like the case of one who wishes he had some land that he would plant some seeds in and harvest without moving a finger or doing anything on his part, or one who

<sup>24</sup> az-Zumar; 53

<sup>25</sup> az-Zumar; 54-55

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<sup>26</sup> Muslim (2877)

wishes to have children without getting married and having relations. The second is like the case of one who plows the land and plants seeds and harvests it, and hopes for a good and beneficial harvest. This is why the people of knowledge are agreed that hope and good expectation is not valid without some action, and we have already mentioned the words of the Mother of the Believers (may Allāh be Pleased with her) that show her intelligence and experience, such that she emphasized that Allāh will never cause the good deeds of anyone to go to waste.

So, in order for your good expectations of Allāh to be a vehicle to push you to your Beloved and to ease the journey for the traveler to the Hereafter, you must complement it with actions, and the righteous people have mentioned countless times the need to have good expectations of Allāh, and all of their statements point to this condition. So, Ibn Abī ad-Dunyā related in his book ‘*Husn adh-Dhann bi Allāh*’ with his chain from ‘Alī bin Bakkār that he was asked about having good expectations of Allāh, and he said: “It is that you are not gathered with the sinners in one place,” and he meant that you do not enter Hell, the abode of ruin. This necessitates that you are not gathered with them in this world doing the same evil action or traversing the same deviated methodology as they are, or that you are both in a place of sin and indecency. So, whoever separates himself from the enemies of Allāh in this world and breaks himself off from them and declares them his enemies and saves himself from their ways, he can then expect the best from his Guardian that he will be saved from their destination and punishment, separated from them in the Hereafter just as he was separated from them in this world.

Otherwise, Allāh has promised those who oppose this principle and accompany such people in their falsehood:

{ “...Surely, Allāh will collect the hypocrites and disbelievers all together in Hell.”}<sup>27</sup>

And Sulaymān bin al-Hakam bin ‘Awānah said that a man supplicated at ‘Arafāt, saying: “Do not punish us in the Fire after You have caused *Tawhīd* to reside in our hearts,” and he then wept. He also said: “You can do whatever You want with Your Mercy,” and he then wept and said: “If You do not have Mercy on us, it is due to our sins. Do not gather us with the wrongdoers, as we have declared enmity to them for Your sake.”<sup>28</sup>

So, whoever opposes and is an enemy to the people of falsehood and their ways in this world can then meet Allāh expecting the best from Him.

In the same book,<sup>29</sup> Hakīm bin Jābir said that Ibrāhīm (peace be upon him) said: “O Allāh, do not join between those who joined partners in worship with You and those who did not,” meaning such that they have the same destination and punishment.

<sup>27</sup> *an-Nisā'*: 140

<sup>28</sup> Ibn Rajab’s ‘*at-Takhwīf min an-Nār*’ (p. 264)

<sup>29</sup> p. 264

Also in the same book,<sup>30</sup> Abī Nu’aym reports with his chain that ‘Awn bin ‘Abdullāh said: “Allāh will not save us from evil only to return us to it,” and he recited:

{ “...and you were on the brink of a pit of Fire, and He saved you from it.”}<sup>31</sup>

...and Allāh will not join between the members of both parties in Hell,

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{ “And they swear by Allāh their strongest oaths that Allāh will not raise up those who die.”}<sup>32</sup>

...and we are swearing our strongest oaths that Allāh will raise up those who die.”

So, rush forth to an oath of allegiance with your Guardian that guarantees that you will not fear any deception, stinginess, or betrayal so long as you remain faithful, true, turn to Allāh, follow the path of the believers, and avoid the path of the wrongdoers.

{“Verily, Allāh has purchased of the believers their lives and their properties for the price that Paradise will be theirs. They fight in Allāh's cause. So, they kill and are killed. It is a promise in truth which is binding on Him in the Torah, Gospel, and the Qur’ān. And who is truer to his covenant than Allāh? So, rejoice in the bargain which you have concluded. That is the supreme success.”}<sup>33</sup>

O Allāh! We expect the best from You, as You will save us just as You saved Your Prophet!

O Allāh! So, save us by Your Mercy from the hardships of this world and the next...*āmīn*!

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<sup>30</sup> p. 265

<sup>31</sup> *Āl 'Imrān*; 103

<sup>32</sup> *an-Nahl*; 38

<sup>33</sup> *at-Tawbah*; 111